

CUMMINGS, MARY. *The Lives of the Buddha in the Art and Literature of Asia*. Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia Number 20. Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, 1982. xiii+225 pp. Plates, bibliography. Cloth US\$17.25, ISBN 0-89148-022-6; paper US \$9.00, ISBN 0-89148-023-4.

The Lives of the Buddha in the Art and Literature of Asia by Mary Cummings is a pleasant, clear account of selected Jātaka tales and incidents in the Buddha's life, presented with illustrations and with an account of the interplay between story and art.

The book is unpretentious in both scale and format. The Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia series has produced it in a convenient size with black and white photographs. The author has chosen a minimum number of stories and has kept her comments concise. In fact, the text takes very little time to read.

After a helpful introduction to the literature, the first part of the book is devoted to Jātaka tales and the second part to incidents in the life of the Buddha. The number of illustrations and the length of the section devoted to each story and incident vary with its popularity in the tradition. Notes which cite only author and page number are replaced by citations in parentheses within the text. More substantive notes follow each section.

The first part of the book begins with a discussion of animal fable Jātakas and then treats four of these. Each begins with an illustration. These are chosen from, respectively, India (Bharhut), Java (Candi Mendut), a nineteenth century English book of Indian tales, and the Tuti-Nama manuscript. The beginning illustration is followed by the story, chosen from one or more translations which the author has edited. Then the author discusses the tale and its variations and shows how they were illustrated. The second part of the book is devoted to the life of the historical Buddha. Since there are certain incidents which are commonly illustrated, the author has divided the Buddha's life into discrete sections. This is the basic format of the book.

The author is sympathetic toward Buddhism and toward story literature and art. I found it refreshing to find modern as well as antique illustrations included. The author has also made an effort, though she seems more comfortable with South Asian materials, to include reproductions and discussion of East Asian images as well.

The only real fault I find with the book is the writing. Although the text is clear and very well organized, the style could have been improved. Sentences like: "In other cases, such as the Culla Sutasoma Jātaka, the repeat pattern is composed in the great laments and questionings by the king's seven hundred wives, many children, courtiers, merchants, and townspeople" (p. 43) are at best unfortunate. While the author's style is seldom this badly flawed, it is often awkward. Although she acknowledges the help of several people in editing, the manuscript should have been reviewed again before printing.

Apart from this the book is a pleasant companion for anyone, and because of its simplicity, length, and good organization it could be recommended to an undergraduate class. While some instructors might fuss at one or another generality with which they disagree, these do not mar the direct subject matter of the book, and should not be considered a problem. For students, reading *The Lives of the Buddha in the Art and Literature of Asia* is a painless way to become familiar with both the lives of the Buddha and a great range of literature.

This book is also a good aid with which to approach the art. While it treats the

play of visual and verbal imagery, it also encourages thought about the role of these stories and images in Buddhist discourse.

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YAMADA RYŪJI 山田隆治 and SHIRATORI YOSHIRO 白鳥芳郎 eds. *Dentō shūkyō to minkan shinkō* 伝統宗教と民間信仰 [Major Religions and Folk Belief]. Nanzan Studies in Cultural Anthropology I. Nagoya/Japan: Nanzan Anthropological Institute, 1982. 240 pp. (in Japanese with long English summary). US\$10.00

This collection of essays, the first of several projected volumes to be edited by the Nanzan University Anthropological Institute, is the fruits of four years of research activities, which began in 1979. Anthropology is currently enjoying a certain boom period in Japan. The Nanzan Institute was one of the ground breakers of the discipline here, and has come to play a leadership role in the field through publications such as *Asian Folklore Studies* and other activities. The publication under review will expand that role into new areas, and it is gratifying to see such activities from the Nanzan Institute.

It is significant that this first collection of essays takes religion as its major topic of importance. It is, of course, impossible to ignore the fact that cultural anthropology must deal in some way or other with religion. This collection, however, is much more positive in its approach than is common, representing an attempt to use religion as a perspective from which to gain a total perspective on the areas to be studied. This is, perhaps, an inevitable direction for an institute with the traditions such as those found at the Nanzan Institute to take.

The significance of this volume could be briefly summarized as follows: it deals with the question of the extent of the relationships between religions with a fixed doctrine (called "traditional religions" in the book) and religions, or customs, which grow from daily life. The major thrust of Japanese cultural anthropology is currently in investigations of the primacy of the so-called "little traditions." The tendency, therefore, has been to gather information primarily on how living local religions have been changed by their encounters with the "major" religions such as Christianity or Buddhism. This might be seen as an allergic reaction to theology.

It is natural enough that the anthropological approach to religion should differ from that of theology, but it does not mean that we should make light of the question of how fixed religious doctrine has influenced daily life. The major characteristic of this book might be said to be its appeal on behalf of an approach which would create some interest in the question of the mutually dependent activities of religion on both the doctrinal and the daily life levels, and especially emphasize the active participation of religion on the doctrinal level. The essay by Yamada, in particular, clearly demonstrates this tendency.

The categories "great tradition" and "little tradition" are used by nearly everyone these days. Research such as I noted above, which is based on the primacy of the little traditions, has probably resulted in a loss of meaning of the term "little tradition" as defined by Redfield. Concepts do tend to mature, and it is doubtful that Redfield would object to what has happened to this one, but there is a need to put things in perspective. In this book, too, we find terms like "great tradition and